

441—200.4(600) Components of adoption services. The components of adoption services are as follows: adoptive home study, preparation of child, selection of family, preparation of family, preplacement visits, placement services, and postplacement services.

200.4(1) Adoptive home study. This component includes the following activities:

a. Family assessment. The family assessment shall include a minimum of two face-to-face interviews with the applicants and at least one face-to-face interview with each member of the household. At least one of the interviews shall take place at the applicant's home. The assessment of the prospective adoptive family shall include an evaluation of the family's ability to parent a special needs child or children including the following:

- (1) Motivation for adoption and whether the family has biological, adopted or foster children.
- (2) Family's and extended family's attitude toward accepting an adopted child and plans for discussing adoption with the child.
- (3) The attitude toward adoption of the significant other people involved with the family.
- (4) Emotional stability, marital history, including verification of marriages and divorces, family relationships and compatibility of the adoptive parents.
- (5) Ability to cope with problems, stress, frustrations, crises, separation, and loss.
- (6) Medical, mental and emotional conditions that may affect the applicant's ability to parent a child, treatment history, and current status of treatment.
- (7) Willingness to accept a child who has medical problems (such as a child who is at risk of, or is HIV positive), mental retardation, or emotional or behavioral problems. Ability to provide for the child's physical, medical and emotional needs and respect the child's ethnic and religious identity.
- (8) Adjustment of any children in the home, including their attitudes toward adoption, relationships with others, and school performance.
- (9) Disciplinary practices that will be used.
- (10) Capacity to give and receive affection.
- (11) Statements from three references provided by the family and additional references the worker may wish to contact.
- (12) Financial information, ability to provide for a child and whether there is a need for adoption subsidy for a special needs child or children.
- (13) Attitudes of the adoptive applicants toward the birth parents and the reasons the child is available for adoption.
- (14) Commitment to and capacity to maintain significant relationships.
- (15) Substance use or abuse, if any, by family members, or members of the household, treatment history and current status of treatment.
- (16) History of abuse, if any, by family members, or members of the household, treatment history, current status of treatment and the evaluation of the abuse.
- (17) Criminal convictions, if any, by family members, or adults in the household, and the evaluation of the criminal record.
- (18) Recommendations for number, age, sex, characteristics, and special needs of a child or children the family can best parent.

b. Record checks. The department shall submit record checks for each applicant and for anyone who is 14 years of age or older living in the home of the applicant to determine whether they have founded child abuse reports or criminal convictions or have been placed on the sex offender registry. The department shall use Form 470-0643, Request for Child Abuse Information, and Form 595-1396, DHS Criminal History Record Check, Form B, for this purpose. Each person subject to record checks shall also be fingerprinted for a national criminal history check. The department's contractor for the recruitment and retention of resource families shall assist applicants in completing required record checks, including fingerprinting.

If the applicant, or anyone living in the home of the applicant, has a record of founded child abuse, a criminal conviction, or placement on the sex offender registry, the department shall not approve the applicant as an adoptive family, unless an evaluation determines that the abuse or criminal conviction does not warrant prohibition of approval.

EXCEPTION: The person making the investigation shall not approve a prospective applicant and shall not perform an evaluation if the applicant or anyone living in the home of the applicant has been convicted of a felony offense as set forth in Iowa Code section 600.8(2) "b." The person making the investigation shall not approve a prospective applicant and shall not perform an evaluation if the applicant or anyone living in the home of the applicant has committed a crime in another state that would be a forcible felony if the crime would have been committed in Iowa, as set forth in Iowa Code section 600.8(2) "b."

The evaluation shall consider the nature and seriousness of the abuse or crime, the time elapsed since the commission of the founded or confirmed abuse or crime, the circumstances under which the abuse or crime was committed, the degree of rehabilitation, the likelihood that the person will commit the abuse or crime again, and the number of abuses or crimes committed by the person.

The person with the founded child abuse or criminal conviction report shall complete and return Form 470-2310, Record Check Evaluation, within ten calendar days of the date on the form to be used to assist in the evaluation. Failure of the person to complete and return Form 470-2310 within the specified time frame shall result in denial of approval for adoption.

The evaluation and decision shall be made by the service area manager or designee. Within 30 days of receipt of the completed Form 470-2310, the department shall mail to the individual on whom the evaluation was completed Form 470-2386, Record Check Decision, which explains the decision reached regarding the evaluation of an abuse or crime. Form 470-2386 shall also be issued when an applicant fails to complete the evaluation form within the specified time frame.

The department shall assess fees associated with the record checks to the adoptive applicant unless the family is being studied to adopt a child with special needs.

c. Written report. The worker shall prepare a written report of the family assessment, known as the adoptive home study, using the PS-MAPP family profile format. The worker shall use the home study to approve or deny a prospective family as an appropriate placement for a child or children. The department adoption worker and supervisor shall date and sign the adoptive home study.

The worker shall notify the family of the decision using Form 470-0745, Adoption Notice of Decision, and, if the worker does not approve the home study, shall state the reasons on the notice. The worker shall provide the family a copy of the adoptive home study with the notification of approval or denial.

d. Preplacement assessment and home study update. A preplacement assessment and home study update is required if the adoptive home study was written more than one year previously, in accordance with Iowa Code section 600.8, and placement of the child is imminent. The preplacement assessment and home study update shall be conducted by completing the following:

(1) The child abuse and criminal record checks shall be repeated. If there are any founded abuses or convictions of crimes that were not evaluated in the previous home study, they shall be evaluated using the process set forth in 200.4(1) "b."

(2) One face-to-face visit shall be conducted with the approved adoptive family.

(3) The information in the approved adoptive home study shall be reassessed.

(4) An updated written report of the reassessment and adoptive home study shall be written, dated, signed by the worker and the supervisor; and a copy provided to the adoptive family.

200.4(2) Preparation of child. This component includes specific activities designed to enable a child to make the transition to an adoptive placement. The activities shall include, but are not limited to:

a. Counseling regarding issues of separation, loss, grief, guilt, anger and adjustment to an adoptive family.

b. Preparation or update of a life book.

c. Provision of age-appropriate information regarding community resources available, such as children's support groups, to assist the child in the transition and integration into the adoptive family.

d. Any appropriate evaluations or testing.

e. HIV testing of a child by the University of Iowa Hospital or a local physician when any of the following conditions exist:

(1) The child was, or may have been, sexually abused by a person who participated in high-risk behavior such as sharing of needles with an infected person or sex participation with an infected person.

- (2) The child's birth mother participated in high-risk behavior, or is HIV positive.
- (3) The child participated in, or has participated in, high-risk behavior.
- (4) The child is symptomatic or at high risk of infections.
- (5) The child received blood products prior to 1986 or the birth parents received blood products prior to 1986, before or during pregnancy.
- (6) There is a lack of medical information regarding the birth parents or the child.

200.4(3) Selection of family. This component includes the activities necessary to select the family which can best meet the needs of the adoptive child.

Prior to preplacement visits a staffing of the child shall be held to select an approved family. A minimum of two social workers and a supervisor shall be included in the staffing. The child's special needs, characteristics, and anticipated behaviors shall be reviewed in the staffing to determine a family that can best meet the needs of the child. Approved families shall also be reviewed in an effort to match the specific family's parenting strengths with a particular child's needs.

The following selection criteria shall be observed:

- a. Preference shall be given to placing children from the same birth family together. If placement together is not possible, or is not in the best interest of the children, the reasons shall be identified and documented in each child's case record. Efforts shall be made to ensure continuous contact between siblings when the siblings are not placed together.
- b. Race, color, or national origin may not be routinely considered in placement selections. Placement decisions shall be made consistent with the best interests and special needs of the child.
- c. A child who is sexually active and at risk of or is HIV positive shall not be placed in a family where other children reside due to the risk of transmission.

200.4(4) Preparation of family. This component includes activities designed to assist the adoptive family in expanding its knowledge and understanding of the child or children. This component should enhance the family's readiness to accept the child or children into their family and encourage their commitment. The activities shall include, but are not limited to:

a. Completion of at least 30 hours of "Partnering for Safety and Permanence: Model Approach to Partnership in Parenting" (PS-MAPP) and the self-study course, "Universal Precautions in Foster and Adoptive Family Homes," before placement of a child. These training requirements apply to families who are adopting special needs children who are under the guardianship of the department.

(1) Foster parents licensed before December 31, 2002, who have been caring for a foster child in their home for at least six months and who have been selected to adopt that child may have their participation in adoption training waived by the service area manager or designee.

(2) Relatives who have cared for a related child for at least six months and who have been selected to adopt that related child may have their participation in the PS-MAPP preservice training waived by the service area manager or designee.

(3) The department may waive the PS-MAPP training requirement in whole or in part when the department finds that:

1. The applicant has completed relevant training or has a combination of relevant training and experience that is an acceptable equivalent to all or a portion of the required preservice training; or
2. There is good cause for the waiver based upon the circumstances of the child and the applicant.
- (4) If the adoptive parents are accepting placement of a child who is at high risk of becoming or is HIV positive, they shall also complete the "Caring for Children With HIV" course.

(5) Applicants must retake PS-MAPP if the adoption approval process is not completed within 24 months after PS-MAPP is initially completed.

b. Discussion with family members regarding problems resulting from a child's separation, loss, grief, and anger due to the loss of the birth parents.

c. Provision of background information on the child and birth family, including a child study that includes experiences such as foster and adoption placements and other pertinent information and the child's life book.

d. Provision of information regarding the child's special needs and behavior patterns.

e. Provision of a description of the child's medical needs, including whether or not the child is at risk of or is HIV positive.

f. Discussion of the impact that adding a new member or members to the family may have on all current family members.

g. Explanation of the subsidized adoption program.

h. Provision of information regarding the community resources that are available to assist the family, such as parent support groups.

200.4(5) *Preplacement visits.* This component includes activities necessary to plan, conduct and assess the transitional visits between the adoptive family and the child or children prior to the adoptive placement of the child in the home.

200.4(6) *Placement services.* Placement services include the activities necessary to plan and carry out the placement of a child or children into the adoptive family.

Before placement of a child, the Agreement of Placement for Adoption, Form 470-0761, shall be signed by all parties.

200.4(7) *Postplacement services.* Postplacement services include supervision, support, crisis intervention and required reports. Postplacement supervision is provided from the time a child is placed with an adoptive family until finalization of the adoption occurs.

a. Postplacement supervision shall focus on the following areas:

(1) Integration and interaction of the child or children with the family.

(2) Changes in the family functioning which may be due to the placement.

(3) Social and emotional adjustment of the child or children.

(4) School adjustment of the child or children who are attending school.

(5) Changes and adjustments that have been made in the family since the placement.

(6) Family's method of dealing with testing behaviors and discipline.

(7) Child's growth and development since placement in the family.

(8) Behavioral evidence of the degree of bonding that is taking place and the degree to which the child is becoming a permanent member of the adoptive family.

b. A minimum of three adoptive home visits are required or, if the family is experiencing problems, as many as are necessary to assess and support the placement.

Home visits shall be completed at a minimum as follows: one no later than 30 days after placement, one no later than 90 days after placement, and a final visit before requesting a consent to adopt. Supervisory reports based on observations shall be completed after the home visits using Form 470-0773, Supervisory Report.

c. A written report based on the postplacement visits with recommendations regarding the finalization of the adoption shall be submitted to the court prior to the hearing to consider granting a decree of adoption.